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ABSTRACT

This report presents the results of a survey to determine the loss levels of library materials at high school media centers and libraries in the Onondaga-Oswego County area of central New York State, and provides an annotated bibliography of literature dealing with loss prevention in libraries. A copy of the questionnaire and various analysis sheets are included. The survey provided data concerning school enrollment, facilities, seating capacities, the number of supervisors, book detection systems, elementary scheduling, access at the high schools, shelving of audiovisual collections, overdues, lost items, replacement percentages, and the percentage of losses to total collections. (FM)

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LOSSES IN SCHOOL LIBRARY MEDIA CENTERS:

A Survey and Annotated Bibliography

by

Connie Gates

and

Gaby Hendley

1979

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IR008216

Losses in School Library Media Centers.

As high school library media specialists in the Central New York area, we were concerned about losses in our media centers. In searching the literature to establish loss levels and make comparisons with our own losses, we were unable to locate useful data. Consequently, we decided to create and circulate a questionnaire on losses in the Onondaga-Oswego County area.

Having devised the initial document, we then submitted it to 10 colleagues for evaluation and revision. The final document was distributed to Library Media Specialists through the CYNECA/OOSLA Newsletter (Central New York Educational Communications Association/Onondaga Oswego School Librarians Association) and through the Library Supervisors of the Syracuse City Schools, Baldwinsville Central Schools, and the Oswego County Boces.

Of the 54 questionnaires that were returned, 21 were not usable for loss statistics, although they did contain other useful information. A copy of the questionnaire, various analysis sheets, and an annotated bibliography follow in the hope that this information will be of value to others seeking data on media center losses.

MEDIA CENTER LOSSES - RESULTS OF SURVEY

Responding: 28 elementary
12 junior high
14 senior high

Question 2.

Enrollment	highest	lowest
elementary	962	320
junior high	1500	502
senior high	2000	371

(detailed enrollment chart on reverse)

Only in the senior high does the school population correlate with book losses, the larger the population, the greater the loss.

5. Facility: 5 elementary schools had open (no walls) facility.

6. Seating capacity: The larger the seating capacity at the junior high level, the greater the loss. No significant correlation at senior high level. Negative correlation at elementary level.

9. Number of supervisors: Number of supervisors had no relation on the book losses.

11. Book detection system: 4 high schools have detection systems which seem to correlate with lower losses.

13. Elementary scheduling: Scheduled classes only - 2
Open scheduling - 7
Combination - 21

No correlation with book losses.

14. Access at high school: Open access - 5
Passes - 18 (2 free access beginning of periods)

No correlation with book losses.

15. Shelving of AV collection: Unsupervised area - 5 elementary, 1 junior high and 2 senior high. All others shelved in supervised area.

Very low losses in AV software.

16. Shelving of AV collection: Integrated - 3 elementary, 1 senior high (partially), all others shelved separately from books.

18. Overdues: No overdues charged except by 1 senior high for reserve materials, 25¢.

19. Lost items:

	list price	library discount	other
elementary	10	11	7
junior high	4	3	0
senior high	10	4	5

Other: half way between present discount and old purchase price
pre-set schedule: hc $2-3, $1 if old, pb $.50
half original purchase price - $1-5 depending on age and condition

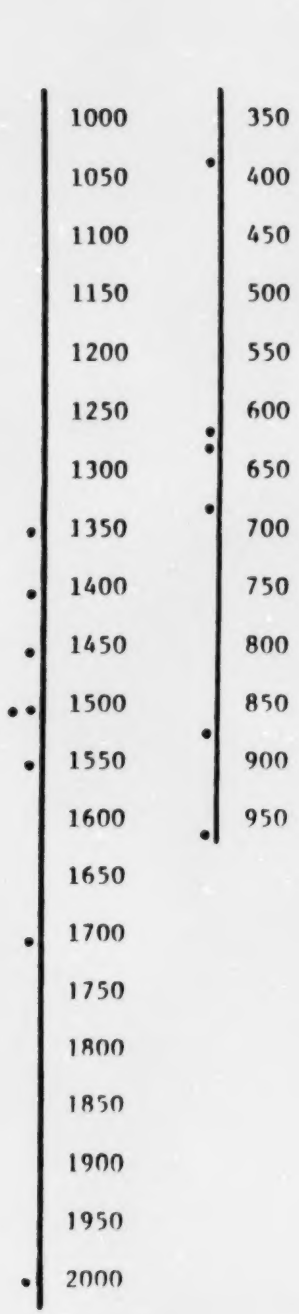
20. Replacement annually:

elementary	7 - 50%	Majority	25%
junior high	10 - 33%		25%
senior high	10 - 50%		25%

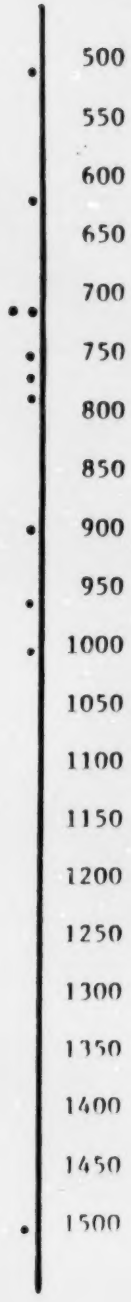
22-24. Most inter-library loans on informal basis with schools in their district and public libraries.

25. Percentage of losses to total collection: (determined by taking number of volumes lost and dividing by the total inventory.)

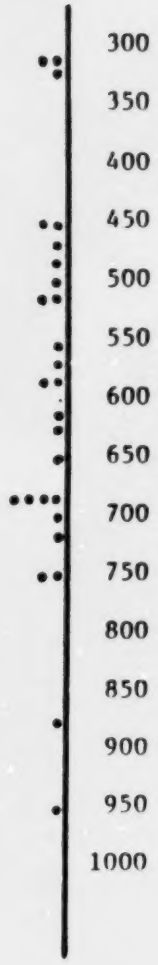
	average loss	lowest	highest
elementary	1.156%	0.18%	3.13%
junior high	2.388%	0.5%	3.5%
senior high	3.269%	1.0%	5.0%



HIGH SCHOOL



JUNIOR HIGH



ELEMENTARY

HIGH SCHOOL

Level	Student Population	75-76 Books	Lost	%	76-77 Books	Lost	%	Average Books	Lost	%
9-12	371	5,826	42	0.72	6,140	71	1.15	5,983	57	.935
9-12	1450		N.A.		20,300	634	3.12	20,300	634	3.12
10-12	1700	6,953	291	4.18	7,617	233	3.05	7,285	262	3.615
10-12	1400	14,010	302	2.16	14,456	187	1.29	14,233	245	1.725
9-12	1200	6,520	198	3.04	6,456	224	3.47	6,488	211	3.255
9-12	1350		N.A.		16,121	938	5.82	16,121	938	5.82
9-12	690		N.A.		13,303	413	3.10	13,303	413	3.10
9-12	1550	12,373	1159	9.36	12,200	674	5.52	12,286	917	7.44
10-12	1500	18,917	948	5.01	18,872	743	3.93	18,894	846	4.47

JR. HIGH

Level	Student Population	75-76 Books	Lost	%	76-77 Books	Lost	%	Average Books	Lost	%
7-9	1000		N.A.		13,180	421	3.19	13,180	421	3.19
7-9	750	5,587	93	1.66	5,429	129	2.37	5,508	111	2.015
7-9	766	6,391	122	1.91	6,485	109	1.68	6,438	116	1.795
7-8	502	7,052	112	1.588	7,080	109	1.539	7,066	111	1.556
6-9	630	3,961	102	3.12	4,106	141	3.43	4,034	122	3.275
6-9	730		N.A.		5,293	124	2.34	5,293	124	2.34
7-9	786		N.A.		4,781	152	3.18	4,781	152	3.18
7-8	721	7,762	336	4.328	7,924	194	2.448	7,843	265	3.388
7-8	900	10,081	64	0.634	10,754	72	0.669	10,417	68	.652

ELEMENTARY

Level	Student Population	75-76 Books	Lost	%	76-77 Books	Lost	%	Average Books	Lost	%
K-6	461	10,672	50	.468	10,942	36	.329	10,807	43	.399
K-5	N.A.	7,379	112	1.51	7,858	99	1.25	7,619	106	1.38
K-5	575	9,339	80	0.85	9,640	99	1.02	9,520	90	.935
Elem	N.A.	3,320	17	0.51	3,391	17	0.50	3,356	17	.506
K-6	450	3,637	21	0.57	4,079	59	1.44	3,858	40	1.01
K-5	650	4,952	265	5.35	5,037	133	2.64	4,995	199	3.995
K-5	690	8,176	64	0.78	8,240	35	0.42	8,209	50	.600
K-6	450	5,948	150	2.52	6,055	124	2.04	6,002	137	2.28
K-6	580	N.A.			4,599	156	3.43	4,599	156	3.43
K-5	328	N.A.			5,045	13	0.26	5,045	13	0.26
K-6	680	13,809	21	.15	14,302	26	.18	14,056	24	.163
K-5	612				8,100	60	.74	8,100	60	.74
K-6	520	8,638	36	.41	8,874	27	0.30	8,756	32	.355
K-6	560	9,354	28	0.299	9,473	105	1.108	9,414	67	.704
K-6	625	10,485	37	0.352	10,730	30	0.279	10,608	34	.316

Various Level	Student Population	75-76 Books	Lost	%	76-77 Books	Lost	%	Average Books	Lost	%
1-8	690		N.A.		15,039	471	3.13	15,039	471	3.13
6-12	700	5,913	71	1.20	5,797	86	1.48	5,855	79	1.34
7-12	642	13,378	440	3.29	13,976	229	1.64	13,677	335	2.465
6-12	1000	9,567	486	5.079	9,658	436	4.51	9,613	461	4.794
5-7	750	7,906	210	2.65	8,967	107	1.19	8,436	159	1.92
7-12	875	9,452	396	4.189	9,620	296	3.076	9,536	346	3.632
4-5	320	6,764	40	0.59	6,961	36	0.517	6,862	38	.553

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QUESTIONNAIRE

Name _____ Building _____

District _____ Telephone _____

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED HOW YOUR BOOK AND A-V MATERIAL LOSSES COMPARE TO OTHER SCHOOLS?

We hope you are interested in contributing to a study of this problem by the Onondaga-Oswego County School Library Media Specialists. We are asking you, not only about the number of resources in your collection and losses, but other information which may relate to this problem. Your answers are needed by February 15, 1978 in order to publish the results in our last newsletter of the school year.

We would appreciate your name and telephone number in case we need to contact you for clarification during the completion of data. No school district will be identified in the published results.

We recognize that no one of us has time to spare, but we truly need your input to obtain meaningful results. We thank you in advance for your contribution. If you have any questions please contact either/or:

Gaby Hendley - Jamesville Dewitt High School - Home phone 446-6809
Connie Gates - Tully Junior-Senior High School Home phone 446-9332

- -

1) Grade level _____
2) Student population _____
3) Teacher population _____
4) Type of school - public _____ private _____
5) Facility - no walls _____ conventional _____ other _____
6) Seating capacity _____
7) Number of exits used regularly _____
8) Extra hours of service - before classes - from _____ to _____
   after classes - from _____ to _____
   evenings M-T-W-Th-F - from _____ to _____
   during summer vacations - _____
9) Average number of adults supervising students at any time _____
   Librarian _____ Teacher _____ Aide _____ Volunteer _____
10) Access to copy machine - none available _____
   within media center _____
   other location in the building _____
   fees charged per page _____ none _____
   free service if copy eventually given to library yes _____ no _____

- 2 -

11) Book detection system yes _____ no _____
model/Company _____ _____
number of years in operation _____
installation cost _____ comments _____

12) Door check yes _____ no _____
by librarian _____ teacher _____ aide ____ volunteer _____
student _____ at all times ____ between classes only ____

13) Elementary Only
open scheduling _____ scheduled classes only _____
combination _____

14) High School Only
passes only _____ open access at all times _____
other _____

15) AV collection shelved - supervised _____ unsupervised area _____

16) AV collection - integrated shelving _____ separate from books _____

17) AV circulation policy
used in library ____ by teachers ____ by students ____
used in school building ____ by teachers ____ by students ____
used out of building ____ by teachers ____ by students ____

18) Overdues charged - yes _____ no _____

19) Lost items charged - list price _____ library discount price ____
library price and processing charge _____
other _____

20) Replacement policy - What percent of your losses do you replace annually? Please estimate.
1/4 _____ 1/2 ____ 1/3 ____ Other _____

21) Replacement Funds - Regular budget _____ Special provisions _____

22) Interschool loan among schools in your district - yes ____ no _____

23) Geographic proximity of other libraries
public library _____ distance _____
academic library _____ distance _____
other _____ distance _____

24) Interlibrary loan policy - written _____ informal _____
with schools in your district _____
with schools outside your district _____
with public libraries _____
other _____

25) BOOKS - If no data is available by Dewey categories, please give only fiction and total non-fiction figures.

Dewey	Inventory June 1976	Losses (excluding discards)	Inventory June 1977	Losses (excluding discards)
000				
100				
200				
300				
400				
500				
600				
700				
800				
900				
92/B				
Reference (if separate)				
Total non-fiction				
Total fiction				
Total				

26) AV SOFTWARE

Filmstrips				
Sound filmstrips				
Slides				
Sound Slides				
Tapes				
Records				
8 mm movies				
Video tapes				
Multi-media kits				
Art prints				
Transparencies				
Games				
Microform titles				
Realia				
Other				

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Please respond to the following questions on separate paper. While these open-ended questions necessitate greater response effort, they are vital components in the issue of Media Center losses. If you are unable to complete this portion due to time limitations, please return the preceding sections.

27) If you have a functioning library committee, describe the membership and responsibilities.

28) Describe existing circulation policy or attach copy (length of loan, renewal, loan to classrooms, etc.)

29) Describe school administrator's role/concern over support of lost materials problem (office interviews, letters to parents, other action in support . . .)

30) Describe teachers support.

31) Describe locally developed approaches to loss of materials.

32) Questions you would like to have included in future surveys.

33) If you are not an OOSLA/CNYECA member and wish to receive a copy of the results of this questionnaire, please send a stamped self-addressed envelope.

Mail to: Gaby Hendley

905 Salt Springs Road

Syracuse, New York 13224

BIBLIOGRAPHY

LOSS PREVENTION IN LIBRARIES

Bartz, A. P. "Are your books running away?" Pennsylvania Association Bulletin, 31:147-8, November, 1976.

The article poses questions to consider before installing a detection system and mentions some techniques in promoting user acceptance during and after installation. The study was undertaken in response to a three-year survey of school media centers with losses between 700 and 1300 in schools with student populations of 1500 to 2500 and book collections of 15,000 to 25,000.

Beach, Allyne and Kaye Gapen. "Library book theft: A case study." College & Research Libraries 38:118-128, March, 1977.

In this study conducted at the University of Ohio, students were queried on the "dimensions, possible motivations, and plausible solutions" to book theft problems. Using 380 student questionnaires, the study reveals that: (1) more thieves were in the lower portion of the middle class categories than non-thieves; (2) motivation is usually deprivation of materials; and (3) students have ambiguous sentiments regarding the legality of book theft. Publicity campaigns and student security guards were not viewed as successful in limiting theft. In conclusion, the authors offer three suggestions to reduce theft: treat it more harshly to redefine its seriousness, purchase duplicate copies of high demand items, and install electronic surveillance systems.

Beagles, Alice. "Reducing losses by changing student attitudes". California School Libraries 47:21-25, Summer 1976.

Because "psychology is cheaper than book detection systems", the author surveyed students at a Los Angeles junior high school about their attitudes toward the library. She tried to change the students' attitudes through the survey, and use the results to find solutions to reduce losses. A kit published by the Center for the Study of Evaluation was used ("Summative evaluation kit", field edition, Spring 1975, Los Angeles: Regents of the University of California). A questionnaire was devised, and administered to 4 classes. Students thought that alerting the library staff to the problem of losses, and talking to students about it were good deterrents. They thought that thefts were caused by students wanting to appear sophisticated, expressing hatred of school, needing information and not wanting to return materials, not caring if others needed the materials and not thinking that stealing is bad. The library is running notices in the school paper based on the results of the questionnaire.

Bommer, Michael and Bernard Ford. "A cost-benefit analysis for determining the value of an electronic security system," College & Research Libraries 35:270-279, July, 1974.

In a scholarly manner, this cost analysis details two methods for sampling a collection's losses, the installation of an ESS (Electronic Security System), and possible resulting benefits. Under consideration are such factors as replacement items vs total losses, staff time in determining replacement items, interlibrary loan costs of borrowing missing items, and the subjective benefits of user confidence and user benefit.

Burdenuk, Eugene. "Secondary school cuts library pilfering" Canadian Library Journal 31:386-391, September, 1974.

The Timmins High and Vocational School installed a Check-point Mark I Security System in 1973. Although the library experienced problems with a high rate of false alarms and an exit violation of fire regulations, the system cut losses by 87% in one year.

Cossar, Bruce. "3-M Tattle-Tape: The eye that never sleeps" Canadian Library Journal 32:213-4, June, 1975.

This description of two basic types of detection systems: the full-circulating and the by-pass explains how the systems operate in a simple yet thorough manner.

Davis, Dianna. "The economical feasibility of installing a book detection system at Cottonwood High school", August 1977, 77 p. E. R. I. C. document # ED 144 603

This study was undertaken to determine if book losses could be sufficiently reduced by a book detection system, to justify its installation and maintenance costs. 67 schools having electronic security systems were surveyed, 54 responded. The average price for installing the system was $10,217, annual maintenance cost $344. No increase in mutilation was reported by 67% of the schools, 20% had some increase. The average decrease in loss was 80%. Some comments from participants: tapes inside book pages lead to mutilation, single-sided tape down the spine is more successful; majority of books should be sensitized, preferably entire collection; takes time to get used to desensitizing each book; overdues increase; better service possible by knowing where all the books are; someone in authority has to be present to apprehend suspects; desk personnel must have good rapport with patrons; sending more books to bindery; system is not infallible, only as effective as those who monitor. The conclusion of this study was that the money saved, and the ability to provide requested materials, justified the investment in a book detection system.

Griffith, J. W. "Library thefts: A problem that won't go away," American Libraries 9:224-227, April, 1978.

Summarizing information on losses, the author points out that all types of people have been taking all types of materials from libraries ranging from doctors to library staff and from books to light sockets and toilet paper. The reasons for taking items seems to result from a desire to build a private collection, the "thrill" of stealing, the desire to settle some type of grudge against the system, or laziness in returning materials. The author states one major problem is a need for simple, efficient inventory procedures to establish loss data. In lieu of this he suggests a sampling process of 6 - 2% samples. In general, he finds that installation of a system is cost effective when losses are from 450-500 volumes per year. In a disquieting conclusion, the author notes the marked increase of mutilation when detection systems have been in use in spite of low-cost photographic services being readily available.

"Honor system experiments: Wins and losses." Library Journal 97:2681, September 1, 1972.

An experiment by the New Haven Free Public Library indicated a positive correlation between the rate of returns and the amount of supervision. Similar findings resulted from an experiment in the Fairfax County School System, where librarians found that under the "open library" policy 50,000 books a year were disappearing as compared to the previous figure of some 20,000. To counter this problem, new charging machines, the elimination of fines, door checks, and additional staff during peak periods have been added.

Huttner, Marian A. "Measuring & reducing book losses", Library Journal 98:512-513, February 15, 1973.

Were losses heavy enough at the Minneapolis Public Library to warrant the purchase or rental of a detection system? Reducing the number of exits and using guards were discarded because of inconvenience to patrons and the number of extra staff needed. To identify losses, several areas of the collection were chosen for sampling techniques. One department was chosen to study losses of periodical issues needed for binding. Reserve book records were examined for items which could not be supplied The loss ratio was then applied to the entire collection. After a detection system was installed, a random sampling was taken of books and periodicals which were implanted with detection devices. A 69-94% reduction of losses was calculated. In one department where all issues of periodicals were protected, the loss rate was reduced from 2.43% to 0.69%, a 72% reduction. The cost of the system over a 3-year period (including supplies) was slightly over $11,000 annually, which was less than their reserve book loss. Public reaction was favorable.

Jay, Hilda L. "Surveillance systems for school media centers", Wilson Library Bulletin 48:529-530, March, 1974.

This article describes the students' attitudes at the installation of a detection system at the media center in Ridgefield (Conn.) High School. The use of photo ID cards was started when the system was installed. The impersonality of a machine was found preferable to monitors checking students. Some students seemed relieved to know that needed materials would be available when needed, and they would not have to steal in self-defense.

Knight, Nancy H. "Library security systems come of age," American Libraries 9:229-32, April, 1978.

In looking at the technological progress of electronic security systems the author states that "the future for detection systems will be the availability of models to fit the size and needs of all libraries." In documenting her statement, she cites a model from 3M designed for small libraries and selling for a remarkable $3,100.00!

Knight, Nancy H. "Theft detection systems for libraries - a survey", Library Technology Reports Vol. 12 No. 1, pp 575-690, November, 1976.

One of the most thorough analyses of detection systems to date, this survey offers detailed information on the 6 most commonly used systems: Book Mark, Checkpoint Mark II, Gaylord, Knogo, Sentronic, and 3M Tattle-tale. Users of these systems respond at length on their respective advantages and disadvantages.

Ladenson, Alex. "Library security and the law", College & Research Libraries 38:109-117, March, 1977.

The theft of library materials is examined in relation to the comparatively recent legal concepts from shoplifting legislation. Willful concealment, detention of suspects, immunity of civil liability and the law of arrest are considered, followed by the author's model law relating to library theft.

McCarthy, Patricia. "They shelved media openly: Eisenhower HS non-print losses are surprising." Wisconsin Library Bulletin 72:29-30, January, 1976.

After five years of inventory and interpretation of losses, three major factors emerged: (1) missing nonprint resources on open shelves were less of a problem than anticipated (However, the open access showed higher loss levels than the closed access areas): (2) books, pamphlets, and magazine losses far exceed those of non-print materials; and (3) persistent and diligent monitoring of open shelves appears to cut down on losses.

Schefrin, Rita A. "The barriers to and barriers of library security", Wilson Library Bulletin 45:870-878, May, 1971.

Although the references to detection systems are a bit dated, other suggestions for reducing book losses are still valid: stamping books on all sides, large and colorful name plates facing the beginning of each story in anthologies, allowing unlimited number of books to be signed out . . . etc.

Schwab, Bernard. "Security systems: how do they work and how do you decide on one?" Wisconsin Library Bulletin 73:127-8, May, 1977.

After differentiating between the by-pass and full-circulating systems, the authors caution future users to watch for problems in binding sensitized periodicals and for damage to cassettes from the desensitizing process. He strongly urges future users to visit nearby installations before purchasing a system.

Sheridan, Robert N. "Measuring book disappearance," Library Journal 99:2040-43, September 1, 1974

The Levittown Public Library's two-year study on losses included both a volume count and a random sample approach. The evidence from the tests showed a "direct relationship" between a book's age in the collection and the likelihood that it would disappear" by calculating losses on a six-month basis. One sample of new books showed 4.73% missing before 60 days with another 3.78% of the group missing during the next six months. After the installation of the Tattle-Tape system, losses were reduced in the fully sensitized collection by as much as 87%.

Sheridan, Robert N. "Special report: keeping the books," Wilson Library Bulletin 51:296-99, December, 1976.

The author suggests some strategies for dealing with alarm incidents and for choosing materials to be sensitized in this review and support of the use of the 3M Tattle Tale System.

Shirley, Don. "Library material security systems: a school district's experience", School Library Journal, April 1977, pp 38-41.

Because of the high cost of replacement, the inconvenience of not being able to supply materials when needed, and the inability to replace out of print materials, the Shawnee Mission Public School system decided to investigate detection systems. The 5 high schools in the district had a loss rate of 4.5% and the 10 junior high school schools lost 4% of their materials annually. Other metropolitan school and public libraries polled reported a loss rate of 5 - 15%. During the school year of 1974-75 three high schools were selected for a pilot project. One had aides acting as door monitors, one had an electronic by-pass system, and one a full-circulating electronic system. All security systems reduced losses. Of the 2 electronic systems the full-circulating system was preferred. Students thought the security systems did cut losses and should be continued. Those having the full-circulating system were most strongly in favor of it. The majority of students said they did not resent having the system, but others might be bothered by it. The by-pass system was least expensive. the door monitors were most expensive. Electronic systems were expensive the first year, but became less expensive in subsequent years. It was decided to install the full-circulating system in 4 of the high schools.

Wisconsin Library Association. "Reports on managment of 7 common chronic library problems", as summarized by facilitators of discussion groups at Fall 1975 & Spring 1976 meetings, 31 p. E. R. I. C. document # ED 129 283.

Stealing and vandalism (starting on p 8) was one of the 7 topics covered in this report. The other subjects were: decline of hardback circulation, facilitating user self-help, volunteer recruitment and orientation, censorship, staff intolerance toward children, and revitalizing long running programs. Their suggestions for preventing theft and vandalism were: public relations program, display vandalized materials, weed catalog of cards for missing books, videotape program on theft/vandalism, multiple copies of high interest items, speed up check out procedures, open shelves, let reference materials circulate, provide photocopying service, design facility to minimize damage and disruptive behavior, and act decisively when vandals caught.